



The State of New Hampshire  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

March 25, 2008

Honorable Martha Fuller Clark, Chairman  
Committee on Energy, Environment and Economic Development  
Room 102 Legislative Office Building  
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 1295, establishing a commission to study issues relating to stormwater.

Dear Chairman Fuller Clark:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 1295, which would create a commission to study issues relating to stormwater. The Department of Environmental Services (DES) supports HB 1295.

Stormwater is emerging as one of the most important water quality issues facing New Hampshire for a number of reasons, including the following:

- Stormwater runoff can be a source of pollutants that degrade water quality. These pollutants include bacteria, the nutrients nitrogen and phosphorus, oil and grease, and chloride from salt used for the deicing of roads and parking lots. Unless managed properly, pollutants in runoff can cause water quality degradation of surface waters and can threaten well water quality for drinking water supplies.
- Municipal separate stormwater systems (MS4s) are facing more stringent federal regulations adopted by the USEPA in recognition of the negative water quality impacts of uncontrolled stormwater discharges. In addition to infrastructure improvements, organizational improvements and alternatives such as creation of stormwater utility districts need to be considered to help municipalities support improvements.
- Stormwater from new development may have negative impacts, both during construction and operation, unless projects are constructed properly.
- Extreme storm events may be occurring more frequently due to climate change, sometimes overwhelming existing systems and raising questions as to what appropriate design criteria should be for new systems.

For these reasons, the work and recommendations of a stormwater commission will be very important for development of improved, sustainable stormwater management practices in New Hampshire. The commission's work will also complement other ongoing legislative initiatives and commissions for improved water management.

In summary, DES fully supports the creation of a stormwater commission. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call Paul Currier at 271-3289 or me at 271-3449.

Sincerely,

Thomas S. Burack  
Commissioner

cc: Rep. Spang  
Rep. Borden  
Sen. Cilley